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5 Ways Acupuncture Creates Lasting New Year's Resolutions

It is the beginning of a new year and, once again, a time to reflect on what changes we can make to improve our lives. If you are intent on improving your health this year, acupuncture and Oriental medicine may be the very thing you need to "stick" to those resolutions.

Here's how acupuncture can help you achieve your goals:

Resolution 1: Reach Target Weight and Stay There

Losing weight is the #1 most common New Year's Resolution. Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine can help you reach your goal weight and maintain it by promoting better digestion, smoothing emotions, reducing appetite, improving metabolism, and eliminating food cravings.



From an Oriental medicine perspective, the acupuncture points, foods and herbs that are chosen to assist with weight loss directly influence the Qi of the Spleen and Liver systems to treat the root imbalances that are causing the weight gain.

From a Western perspective, acupuncture and Oriental medicine have been shown to have an effect on the function of the nervous system, endocrine system, digestive system, food cravings, and metabolism. All of which can help to energize the body, maximize the absorption of nutrients, regulate elimination, control overeating, suppress the appetite, and reduce anxiety.

Resolution 2: Stay Sharp

Your New Year's resolution may be to learn a new language or take a class at your local college. However you choose to exercise your brain, acupuncture can help. Numerous studies suggest that acupuncture can help improve memory, mental clarity, concentration and cognitive function.

One recently published study (see below) shows how acupuncture can be used to treat memory impairment induced by diabetes and cerebral ischemia. Other studies have looked at how acupuncture affects the performance of students during an exam, post-menopausal "brain fog", Alzheimer's disease and vascular dementia. All results, thus far, have been positive.

Resolution 3: Relieve Pain Naturally

If pain is keeping you from living your life to the fullest, acupuncture can help. Increasingly, people are looking for more natural approaches to help relieve painful conditions instead of relying on medications. Acupuncture has no side effects and can be helpful for all types of pain, regardless of what is causing the pain or where the

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Acupuncture Point for Mental Clarity: Du 20



Feeling a little foggy? Having trouble concentrating?

Massage the acupuncture point, Du 20 for some mental clarity.

Du 20 is located on the top of the head, midway between the ears. It is used to clear the mind and improve focus.

Stimulate the point with your index finger for 30-45 seconds for a quick "brain boost".

Healthy Brain Habits

pain is located. Some studies have shown the pain relief it provides can last for months.

Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) of the brain before and after acupuncture treatment for pain shows dramatic decreases in activity in the pain centers of the brain - up to 70%.

In addition to reducing pain, acupuncture also hastens the healing process by increasing circulation and attracting white blood cells to an injured area.



Resolution 4: Quit Smoking

Acupuncture has turned a growing number of cigarette cravers into permanent ex-smokers. In fact, researchers say that acupuncture is a promising treatment for all types of addiction from cigarettes to heroin.

In one study, a team from Yale University successfully used auricular (ear) acupuncture to treat cocaine addiction. Results showed that 54.8% of participants tested free of cocaine during the last week of treatment, compared to 23.5% and 9.1% in the two control groups. Those who completed acupuncture treatment also had longer periods of sustained abstinence compared to participants in the control groups.

The acupuncture treatments for smoking cessation focus on jitters, cravings, irritability, and restlessness; symptoms that people commonly complain about when they quit. It also aids in relaxation and detoxification.

Resolution 5: Eliminate Stress

Stress reduction is always on the top ten list for New Year's resolutions and for a good reason. Stress is often the cause of illness and the deterioration of health. Numerous studies have demonstrated the substantial benefits of acupuncture in the treatment of stress, anxiety and lowering blood pressure

In addition to acupuncture, Oriental medicine offers a whole gamut of tools and techniques that can be integrated into your life to keep stress in check. These tools include Tui Na, Qi Gong exercises, herbal medicine, dietary therapy, meditations and acupressure that you can administer at home.

Needless to say, if the stress in your life is throwing you off balance, consider coming in for a treatment to regain peace of mind and stay healthy.

Call now to see how Acupuncture and Oriental medicine can help you with your New Year's Resolutions!

Here are some steps you can take to help optimize brain health and sharpen your memory:

Eat More Produce - Studies that focus on food and memory show that the more produce you eat, the better. One 25-year Harvard Medical School study of more than 13,000 women showed that the participants who ate relatively high amounts of vegetables over the years had less age-related decline in memory. Cruciferous vegetables (broccoli, Brussels sprouts and cabbage) and leafy green vegetables had the biggest effect on helping women retain their memory during the course of the study. In another study, the phytochemicals, anthocyanin (found in berries of all colors and cherries) and quercetin (found in onions, kale and apples), actually reversed some of the age-related memory deficits in laboratory animals.

Heart Health – A healthy heart makes for a healthy brain. Because oxygen and nutrients are carried in the blood stream, anything that impedes blood flow will starve those all-important brain cells. Review your blood pressure and cholesterol level. Know your numbers and if they are elevated, take immediate measures to bring them down.

Sleep – When we sleep, the brain has time to recharge. Studies show that 7-8 hours of sleep a night helps to strengthen memory. Acupuncture is effective at treating sleep problems, so please let us know if you are having trouble

Acupuncture Improves Memory and Learning Capacity

Acupuncture can significantly improve learning and memory capacity that has been impaired by hyperglycemia and cerebral ischemia, according to a new study.

A study published in the journal, *Neuroscience Letters*, reported on whether electroacupuncture (acupuncture needles stimulated with a mild electrical current) could improve learning and memory in rats whose memory and cognitive functions were impaired by the decreased circulatory effects of diabetes resulting in cerebral ischemia.

In the study, the effects of the acupuncture treatments were measured with a passive avoidance test, an active avoidance test, the Morris water maze and electrophysiology. With all tests, significant improvements were seen in restoring memory and learning capacity.

The researchers remarked that previous investigations have demonstrated that electroacupuncture can



improve primary and secondary symptoms such as peripheral neuropathy and diabetic encephalopathy in diabetic rats. They believe that the positive results of this study warrant further investigation.

Source: *Neuroscience Letters* Volume 443, Issue 3, 10 October 2008, Pages 193-198
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sleeping.

Exercise - Regular physical activity has been shown to decrease the risk of dementia and Alzheimer's disease by about half. Exercise increases blood flow to the brain and helps regulate blood sugar levels; both of which improve brain function and memory. Aim for 30 minutes a day.

Challenge Your Brain - Keep your mind active and challenged. Brain function decreases with age. Studies show that cognitive exercise can improve blood flow to the brain. Spend at least 15 minutes each day on a mental exercise such as a crossword puzzle, journaling or learning a new language to slow memory loss.